

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Table Rock Wilderness Trail and Trailhead Project

Environmental Assessment No. OR-080-01-13

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Cascades Resource Area
Clackamas County, Oregon

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Abstract: This environmental assessment discloses the predicted environmental effects of one action alternative and one no action alternative for lands within Table Rock Wilderness, located in Township 7 South, Ranges 3 and 4 East, Willamette Meridian. The proposed action is to reestablish safe and reasonable access to Table Rock Wilderness and Pechuck Lookout. A major flood event in 1996 caused road damage that required the closure of road segments accessing two trailheads, one into Table Rock Wilderness and one to Pechuck Lookout. The proposed action complies with Wilderness Management guidance in the *Salem District Resource Management Plan*, May 1995 (page 38) and with management goals and objectives in the *Table Rock Wilderness Management Plan*, February 1987 (pages 9 and 18), for providing adequate portal facilities for the use and enjoyment of the wilderness area while still protecting resource values and wilderness character.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	1
Purpose and Need	1
Proposed Action Summary	1
Location	1
Conformance with Land Use Planning and Guidance	1
Decisions to be Made	2
Scoping	2
Issues	3
 Description of Alternatives	3
Alternative A: Proposed Action	3
Alternative B: No Action	5
Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed	6
 Description of Affected Environment	6
Recreation/Wilderness/Visuals	6
Cultural Resources	6
Wildlife	7
Vegetation	8
Noxious Weeds and Native Plant Materials	8
Sensitive, Threatened and Endangered Animal and Plant Species	9
Water/Fish	9
Soils	9
 Environmental Effects	10
Alternative A: Proposed Action	10
Alternative B: No Action	12
 List of Preparers/Interdisciplinary Team Members	14
 Appendix A: Environmental Elements Summary	
Appendix B: Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives	

Introduction

Purpose and Need

A major flood event in 1996 caused road damage that required the closure of road segments accessing two trailheads, one into Table Rock Wilderness and one to Pechuck Lookout (See Project Map). The road segment leading to Table Rock Trailhead was evaluated and found to be too unstable for long-term repairs. As a result, visitors must now traverse along a mile of Table Rock Road to reach the old Table Rock Trailhead. A slide also occurred along Rooster Rock Road restricting vehicle access to the Pechuck Lookout Trailhead requiring visitors to hike over two miles on an existing road to reach the trailhead (See Project Map). These two slides have significantly reduced access to the Table Rock Wilderness. The proposed trail and trailhead improvements are needed to reestablish safe and reasonable access to Table Rock Wilderness and Pechuck Lookout. In addition to safety considerations, work on trailheads and trail access is needed to prevent the establishment of undesignated trails and to provide access that contributes to a positive wilderness experience.

Proposed Action Summary

The proposed action would entail 3,500 feet of trail construction for the proposed Wapiti Trail and 4,000 feet of trail maintenance and realignment work on an existing trail for the proposed Rooster Rock Trail (See Project Map). The establishment of the Table Rock and Rooster Rock Trailheads are being proposed to replace the two trailheads cut off by the road closures, resulting from the 1996 flood damage (See Project Map). Safety improvements related to parking and turn around areas are also proposed for the existing Bull Creek Trailhead (See Project Map). The trail and trailhead work would help maintain access for recreational opportunities to the wilderness and would help reduce the development of undesigned trails established by visitors trying to gain access to the wilderness without hiking a road.

Location

Table Rock Wilderness is approximately 5,800 acres in size with a proposed addition of 350 acres in the Salem District Resource Management Plan, May 1995 (page 38). Table Rock Wilderness is located in the western foothills of the Cascade Mountains Physiographic Province approximately 19 miles southeast of the City of Molalla in Clackamas County, Oregon (See Vicinity Map). The designated boundaries of Table Rock Wilderness lie completely within Township 7 South, Ranges 3 and 4 East, Willamette Meridian. See the Project Map for the location of the proposed trail and trailhead improvement projects.

Conformance with Land Use Planning and Guidance

The proposed action is designed to comply with the *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan*, May 1995, and the *Northwest Forest Plan* (NFP) and the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*, April 1994. Table Rock Wilderness falls within the Molalla Watershed. The *Molalla Watershed Analysis* (May 1999) did not specifically address the current access needs in Table Rock Wilderness, but did provide for the development of trails and trailheads where needed (page 187). The proposed action would also

be in compliance with or contribute to meeting the following goals and objectives in the *Table Rock Wilderness Management Plan*, February, 1987 (pages 9 and 18):

Table Rock Wilderness Management Goal:

To provide for the long-term protection and preservation for the area's wilderness character under a principle of non-degradation, while providing for use and enjoyment of the area by visitors in a manner that will leave the area unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as a wilderness.

Table Rock Wilderness Management Objectives:

- *To provide and manage adequate portal facilities to protect resource values and to accommodate visitor needs including vehicle/trailer parking and regulatory, informational and directional signing.*
- *To provide and manage a developed trail system which allows visitors to test hiking and horseback riding skills and experience a sensation of physical exertion and feeling of accomplishment.*
- *To minimize the establishment of impromptu footpaths in the Trailless Zone created by excessive use of certain cross-country routes.*
- *To design and construct new trail segments and relocated portions of the existing developed trail system using wilderness trail standards for hiking/horseback riding use.*

Decisions to Be Made

Richard C. Prather, Cascades Resource Area Field Manager, is the official responsible for deciding whether or not to prepare an environmental impact statement, and whether to approve the proposed action, part of the proposed action, or the no action alternative.

Scoping

The proposed trail and trailhead improvements were published in the Salem District Project Update Report in September and December of 2000 and in March of 2001. No comments or concerns related to the proposed project were received.

Issues

Below is a description of the issues related to the purpose, need and proposed action. Those resources which are potentially affected, but for which no issues were identified are described in this document in the Description of Affected Environment (pages 6-9) and the Environmental Elements Summary (Appendix A).

Recreation: How will the proposed access changes affect recreational use and wilderness values in the Table Rock Wilderness?

Description of Alternatives

Alternative A: Proposed Action

Proposed Trail Projects:

1. Wapiti Trail

The proposed Wapiti Trail would leave the proposed Table Rock Trailhead and extend approximately 3,500 feet in length, to connect up to the existing trail system in the lower portion of Table Rock's north/northwest ridge line (See Project Map).

2. Rooster Rock Trail

The proposed Rooster Rock Trail would generally follow the same alignment as an existing "historic trail" established by motorcycle use prior to the designation of Table Rock Wilderness in 1984. Approximately 4,000 feet in length, the proposed Rooster Rock Trail would begin at the proposed Rooster Rock Trailhead near the end of Rooster Rock Road and extend north upslope to connect with the Rooster Rock/Pechuck Lookout Trail (See Project Map).

Design Features Common to All Trail Projects:

- All trails will be designed within Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service trail design and construction standards (BLM, Manual 9114-1 and USFS, Handbook 2309.18-92-2) suitable for hiking and horse/pack animal use in a wilderness setting.
- No motorized equipment would be used within Table Rock Wilderness. Common hand trail tools (pulaskis, mcleods, digging bars, shovels, bark spuds, draw sheaves, etc.) suitable for a wilderness setting would be used for trail construction. These tools comply with the "minimum tool" concept for trail work within wilderness areas.
- Trails would be aligned to minimize erosion by maintaining less than 12 percent grade, whenever possible, and less than 20 percent grade for distances no longer than 50 feet. Trail construction techniques such as rolling dips and cross slope drainage will also be utilized.
- Trail tread will be 24 inches wide consisting of a natural mineral soil surface. The vegetation clearing limit for the trail would be no wider than two feet on either side of the trail and no more than ten feet in height. Trail construction will include reinforced switchbacks, climbing turns, and reinforced trail approaches using native, peeled Douglas firs (no greater than seven

inches in diameter) and/ or non-native materials, rough cut, treated timbers suitable for a wilderness setting. Sawdust, wood clippings and shavings from treated wood will be collected, hauled out and disposed of properly.

- Vegetation to be cleared would include sword ferns, salal, moss, and other duff material. No trees larger than seven inches in diameter would be removed and any snags or large downed logs would be left as intact as possible.

Proposed Trailhead Projects:

1. Bull Creek Trailhead

The Bull Creek Trailhead is an existing trailhead adjacent to Bull Creek Trail along Rooster Rock Road on Table Rock Wilderness's southern boundary (See Project Map). Opportunities for turning vehicles towing a horse trailer are currently very limited. The proposed improvement would include adding a 40'x 80' horse trailer turning area on an existing road-side shoulder, a ½ - mile west of Bull Creek Trailhead (See Project Map). A 20'x50' horse trailer parking area along an existing road-side shoulder would also be added approximately ¾-mile west of the Bull Creek Trailhead (See Project Map). A 20' x 60' trailhead vehicle parking area would be located across the road from the beginning of the Bull Creek Trail on an existing road-side shoulder (See Project Map). Minor leveling would be needed and some grasses, shrubs, and young red alders (less than seven inches in diameter) would need to be removed. Approximately 100 cubic yards of ¾"-minus gravel would be spread to provide an adequate parking surface on all three areas.

2. Rooster Rock Trailhead

The Rooster Rock Trailhead would be located on the southern boundary of Table Rock Wilderness near the end of Rooster Rock Road (See Project Map). A 20'x 40' parking area would be constructed on an existing road-side shoulder. Minor leveling would be needed and some grasses, shrubs, and young red alders (less than seven inches in diameter) would need to be removed. Approximately 40 cubic yards of ¾"-minus gravel would be spread to provide an adequate parking surface.

Design Features Common to All Trailhead Projects:

- None of the proposed trailhead improvement activities would take place within the Table Rock Wilderness boundary. No trees greater than seven inches in diameter would be removed.
- Equipment used to construct proposed parking area would include a grader, a 12-yard dump truck, and a front end loader for large rock placement. Work with motorized road maintenance equipment would take place between July 16th and February 28th to comply

with seasonal restrictions related to disturbance in critical habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl.

- Large boulders ranging from one to two tons would be placed at edge of parking areas to discourage expansion outside of parking area boundaries.
- An information board would be installed at each trailhead. The information boards would be 3' x 6' in size and constructed of treated lumber, painted dark brown to help blend with the surrounding area. The information boards would feature information about Table Rock Wilderness and "Leave No Trace" wilderness use ethics.
- Survey and Manage/Special Status Species: Mitigation measures would be incorporated upon identification of any species requiring special management under the following references: *the Endangered Species Act of 1973, BLM manual 6840 - Special Status Species Management, Oregon-Washington Special Status Species Policy - Instruction memorandum no. Or-91-57 and Appendix B-1 of the RMP p.28, Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (S&M ROD, January 2001) and the final *Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement For Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (S&M FSEIS, November 2000).
- Noxious Weeds and Native Plant Materials: Seeds used for re-vegetating disturbed soil outside the parking area would be certified free of noxious weeds. These seeds would consist of either native or non-native sterile/annuals or short lived, non-invasive species as directed in *Instruction memorandum no. OR-2001-014 (Policy of the Use of native Species Plant Materials)*. Eradication or containment measures would be taken as directed in BLM Manual 9015 and *Instruction Memorandum OR-080-93-25* in the event that infestations of high priority noxious weeds are found on the project area.

Alternative B: No Action

Under the "no action" Alternative B, the trail and trailhead improvements would not occur.

Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed

Repairing the slide areas along both Table Rock and Rooster Rock roads were evaluated. Both areas were found to be unstable and not good candidates for repair to restore access to the trailheads.

Description of Affected Environment

This section describes the major elements of the environment in the vicinity of the Proposed Action which may be affected. Appendix A also contains a summary of elements which have been considered, including those which are not likely to be affected by this proposal, but which the BLM is required by law or policy to consider.

Recreation/Wilderness/Visuals

Most of the visitors to Table Rock Wilderness originate from the Willamette Valley, and it is estimated that approximately 500 people per year visit Table Rock Wilderness. Most of this use occurs in the summer and fall months and consists of day hiking, backpacking, camping, nature study, photography, huckleberry picking, horseback riding and hunting. Winter visitation is limited due to snow, but low levels of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing do occur. The use of motorized or mechanized equipment (bicycles) are prohibited in Table Rock Wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act.

Due to road slides caused by the 1996 floods, vehicular access to the Table Rock Trailhead and the Pechuck Lookout Trailhead is no longer possible. Visitor use has already established informal trailheads where both roads were blocked near the slide areas. Visitors using informal trailheads are currently required to hike along a road for over a mile from the Table Rock Road slide and two miles from the Rooster Rock Road slide before being able to access the Table Rock Wilderness trail system. Several visitors have indicated that the hike along the roads negatively impacts their overall experience, and have expressed the need for accessing the trail system from the existing informal trailheads. The proposed Rooster Rock Trail would follow an existing trail established by motorcycle use prior to the designation of the Table Rock Wilderness in 1984.

While people are already parking at the informal trailheads, improvements for vehicle turnaround and parking surface are still needed for both safety and visual considerations. The Bull Creek Trailhead is still accessible, but does not have a graveled parking area. None of the existing informal or designated trailheads have a safe turnaround area for horse trailers.

A Visual Resource Management Inventory was completed for the Salem District in the Salem District Resource Management Plan, May 1995 (page 36-37). Table Rock Wilderness falls within a Class I designation which calls for the preservation of the existing character of the landscape. Lands along Table Rock Road and Rooster Rock Road outside the wilderness boundary fall within a Class II designation which calls for the retention of the existing character of the landscape.

Cultural Resources

The northwestern Oregon Cascades were utilized in aboriginal times by Native American groups residing for most of the year in the river valleys. Three prehistoric sites (35CL25, 35CL41, and Image Rock) occur within Table Rock Wilderness. The Historic Table Rock Trail (site 35CL34, which includes the portion of the presently developed trail system in existence prior to 1950) is part of an extensive system of ridge top trails which served as travel and trade routes for the Indian inhabitants of the Willamette Valley, the upland river valleys, and eastern Oregon. The two lithic

scatter sites associated with the trail may represent the campsites of aboriginal hunters, traders and travelers. Table Rock and Rooster Rock are portrayed in some local Indian legends as prominent features. The occurrence of a petroglyph (Image Rock) within the wilderness may indicate religious significance and use of the area by the Native American people. None of the prehistoric sites identified within Table Rock Wilderness are located in proximity to the proposed project sites.

The Historic Table Rock Trail was first recorded by General Land Office surveyors in 1882, but by then the trail had already long been in use by local homesteaders. The trail served as a route by which Molalla River residents trekked to Bagby Hot Springs from the 1890's into the second decade of the 20th Century. Prospectors also entered the area using the Historic Table Rock Trail, although no gold was discovered in the wilderness area.

The Historic Table Rock Trail also figured prominently in early fire protection efforts in the north Cascades. Material to build the first lookout at Pechuck was packed in over the trail in 1918. The current Pechuck Lookout structure, a wood and stone two-story building, was constructed in 1932 by the Clackamas/Marion Fire Protection District, with material packed in over the South Fork Molalla River Trail. The Table Rock Historic Trail was used to supply the lookout during its occupation until it was closed in 1964. BLM staff and volunteers completed restoration work on Pechuck Lookout in 1997 and the building is currently available for overnight use by visitors.

In 1983, a portion of the Historic Table Rock Trail was determined to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, for its local history associational values. Sites 35CL25 and 35CL41 were determined eligible as part of the context of the trail system. In 1990, Pechuck Lookout was added to the National Historic Lookout Register.

Wildlife

Several large mammals can be found within Table Rock Wilderness. A small herd of Roosevelt elk is known to use Table Rock Wilderness's lower south slopes. Black-tailed deer are also common throughout the area. Cougar, which feed primarily on deer, are also expected to occur here. Black bear have been observed and may have dens within Table Rock Wilderness. Small mammals are much more numerous. Mountain beaver and small burrowing rodents are abundant in moist, brushy areas. A few pocket gophers occur in and around the high meadows. Snowshoe hares are common at higher elevations and feed on the herbaceous vegetation in meadows and brushy areas. Pika, small rabbit-like mammals, inhabit the talus, particularly below Table Rock. Red Tree Voles may also be present. Coyotes and bobcats, which prey on many of these small mammals, also inhabit the area.

Birds of prey, including Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, and Sharp-shinned Hawk have been seen in and around Table Rock Wilderness during daytime hours. Nocturnal hunters, including Great Horned Owl, Northern Pygmy-owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Northern Spotted Owl and Barred Owl have all been found in and around the wilderness area during night time surveys. Primary cavity excavators include Pileated Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker and Red-breasted Sapsucker, provide homes for numerous other forest birds and mammal species. The songbird community is typical for an even-aged conifer forest of this type, consisting of a few very common species and a number of less common species associated with

roadside edges or small special habitat patches. Hermit Warbler, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Varied Thrush, Winter Wren and Wilson's Warbler are among the most abundant species, and Hermit Thrush, Townsend's Solitaire and Audubon's Warbler may be found at higher elevations along the ridge lines. Common nighthawks often nest in clearcut and on old landings at the edge of the wilderness, and can be seen hunting flying insects at dusk and dawn.

The amphibian and reptile community is also typical of a conifer forest of this type. Common Garter Snake is the most abundant reptile, and Northern Alligator Lizards have been found in open sunny habitats or along roadsides. Pacific Tree frogs and Rough-skinned Newts are the most common amphibians, and might be seen anywhere within the wilderness. The larvae of Tailed Frog and Pacific Giant Salamander have been found in many of the streams, and very large adult Pacific Giant Salamanders have been seen along trails during humid or rainy days. Red-legged Frog, a declining species in the Willamette Valley lowlands, is fairly common along the lower slopes of the wilderness area, especially near ponds, seeps and springs.

Vegetation

The overstory in the vicinity of the proposed trail projects consist of Douglas-fir and noble fir with some vine maple and red alder. The shrub/ground layer is relatively sparse with sword fern, Oregon-grape and salal. Very little undisturbed forest vegetation exists along the road-side shoulders of the proposed trailhead improvements. Most of the vegetation along the proposed trailhead parking areas are native and non-native shrubs, grasses and other herbaceous vegetation. The proposed horse trailer turnaround area for the Bull Creek Trailhead does have small red alder (less than seven inches in diameter).

Noxious Weeds and Native Plant Materials

The following New Invader noxious weeds are known to occur in the Molalla Watershed and in the vicinity of the Table Rock Wilderness Area: diffuse, spotted and meadow knapweeds (*Centaurea diffusa*, *C. maculosa*, and *C. pratensis*). None of the known sites are associated with the proposed projects. The management goal for New Invader species is to eradicate known infestations and to prevent spreading them to new locations.

The following Established Infestation noxious weeds are known to occur in the Molalla Watershed and in the vicinity of the Table Rock Wilderness Area: tansy ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), bull and Canadian thistles (*Cirsium vulgare* and *C. arvense*), St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) and Scot's broom (*Cytisus scoparius*). Established Infestation noxious weed species are common throughout much of western Oregon. The management goal for Established Infestation species is to control existing infestations and to prevent spreading them to new locations.

A supply of locally adapted, weed-free blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*) is available for re-vegetation needs for these projects. A limited supply of shrubs and other herbaceous species from the Molalla Watershed are also available.

Sensitive, Threatened or Endangered Federally Listed Animal and Plant Species

Animals: Table Rock Wilderness is within critical habitat and a Late-Successional Reserve for the Northern Spotted Owl, a federally Threatened species in Oregon. Historically, wolverines probably occurred within Table Rock Wilderness, but verifying their presence today has been difficult, because they travel over such wide areas. Wolverine are also listed as threatened by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Table Rock Wilderness also provides habitat for Red Tree Voles, a federal Category C Survey and Manage species. All of the proposed projects occurring within suitable habitat were surveyed for the presence of Survey and Manage Mollusk species; none were identified.

Plants: A botanical evaluation and several surveys have been completed for Table Rock Wilderness. No species of concern were identified for any of the proposed projects. Surveys are required for Category A and C Survey and Manage Species when habitat disturbing kinds of activities are proposed. Category A and C species are identified in *Table 1-1. Species Included in Survey and Manage Standards and Category Assignment (January 2001)* in the *S&M ROD/S&G, January 2001*, pp.41 - 51. The proposed projects are not habitat disturbing kinds of activities for Rare or Uncommon botanical survey and manage species for which pre-disturbance surveys are practical (Categories A and C).

Water/Fish

None of the proposed projects take place within a riparian area and no streams will need to be crossed.

Soils

The developed trail system passes through three major soil climatic zones. The first zone, mesic (1,200 to 1,700 feet), consists of soils with topsoils having thicknesses of 8 inches or more, clayey subsoils and deep depths. The second zone, frigid (1,700 to 2,800 feet), consists of soils having top soils four to eight inches thick, gravelly textures and 20 to 40 inches deep. The third zone, cryic (2,800 to 4,600 feet), consists of soils with top soils four inches or less in thickness, very gravelly textures and depths of less than 20 inches. Soil fertility levels are very low in the cryic zone. These soils can be subject to compaction when moist and can be highly subject to surface runoff and erosion.

Environmental Effects

This section of the environmental assessment considers and compares the environmental effects of implementing each alternative on the resources described in the Affected Environment section. These effects may be direct, indirect or cumulative, short term or long term. Effects are direct when they occur in the same place and at the same time as the proposed action. Effects are indirect when they do not take place at the same time and place as the proposed action, but when

they can be related to the proposed action. Cumulative effects are the effects of the proposed action when considered with past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. When added together, cumulative effects are those which independently do not pose a risk, but collectively may have some measurable effects. In addition, cumulative effects have been documented in the Salem District RMP FEIS and the Northwest Forest Plan. Standards and Guidelines in the Salem District RMP, help ensure that significant cumulative effects beyond what was identified in this document would not occur. The resource values not identified in this section were those with no, or only negligible impacts, or those that are identified in the Environmental Elements Summary (See Appendix A).

Alternative A: Proposed Action

Recreation/Wilderness/Visuals

The proposed construction of the Wapiti Trail and the reconstruction of the existing Rooster Rock Trail would improve the wilderness experience of visitors by allowing them to access the trail system from the trailheads as they did prior to the 1996 floods. It would also help reduce the chances of potential establishment of undesigned, “impromptu” trails being developed by visitors traveling cross-country in an effort to avoid hiking on roads.

The proposed establishment of the new Table Rock Trailhead and the Rooster Rock Trailhead would replace the two trailheads where vehicle access was cut off by flood damage to roads in 1996. Use of the proposed trailheads is already occurring and making the proposed improvements would provide safer parking and turnarounds for existing use. The information boards would also provide information about Table Rock Wilderness and help educate visitors on “Leave No Trace” wilderness use ethics. The improvements proposed for the existing Bull Creek Trailhead would also improve parking and turnaround safety for both passenger vehicles and horse trailers. The large rocks around the perimeter of the trailheads would help prevent the impromptu expansion of the parking areas over time. Reestablishing designated trailheads would encourage the dispersal of visitation throughout Table Rock Wilderness, helping to maintain the opportunity for visitors to experience solitude.

The proposed trail construction would not impact the preservation of the existing landscape character and would comply with Visual Resource Management Class I guidelines. The proposed trailhead improvements would not impact the retention of the existing character of the landscape and would comply with Visual Resource Management Class II guidelines.

The proposed action would provide a level of public access similar to that which was available prior to 1996 flood damage which cut off vehicle access to two trailheads. Parking at all the trailheads would still be relatively limited. No significant cumulative increases in visitation, or impacts to the wilderness character, are expected from the proposed action.

Cultural Resources

No significant negative impacts to cultural resources are expected as a result of implementing the

proposed action. As described above, providing the Rooster Rock Trailhead and Trail would enhance the visitors experience by providing them with the opportunity to hike to Pechuck Lookout through a setting more in keeping with the historical context of the lookout. Construction of the Wapiti Trail will not impact any known sites and joins the trail system below the portion of the Historic Table Rock Trail that is listed as eligible in the National Register of Historic Places. Work on the Rooster Rock Trail consists of maintenance and realignment of an existing trail previously joining the Historic Table Rock Trail. The Rooster Rock Trail and Trailhead work is not expected to significantly increase public use or provide access to previously isolated cultural properties. Rather this work is expected to restore public access that is similar to that which was available before the flood damage of 1996. No cumulative impacts to cultural resources are expected.

Wildlife

No trees greater than seven inches in diameter would be removed for either the trail construction or trailhead improvements, so no significant loss of habitat is expected for bird or mammal species. The construction and maintenance of the Wapiti Trail and the Rooster Rock Trail would result in the loss of some vegetation and duff habitat for invertebrates; however, a survey was completed, and no species of concern were identified. Significant increases in visitation that would lead to increases in wildlife disturbance or habitat impacts are not expected. No cumulative impacts to wildlife resources are expected.

Vegetation

The proposed trail construction would involve the clearing of a two foot tread path down to mineral soil, and another foot of shrub vegetation on either side of the tread path. Conifer trees less than seven inches in diameter may be removed to provide trail stabilization where needed. Vegetation would also be pruned up to ten feet high for one foot on either side of the path. No cumulative impacts to plant resources are expected.

Noxious Weeds and Native Plant Materials

Any ground disturbing activity may lead to increase in the density of the Established Infestations already present in the Molalla Watershed. Re-vegetating the exposed soil with native grasses would prevent the increase and spread of established infestations. There is a very low risk that these projects would result in the introduction of new weed infestations.

Sensitive, Threatened and Endangered Animal and Plant Species

Animals: No suitable habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl or Red Tree Vole would be modified under the proposed action. Any effects would be disturbance in nature and associated with the use of road maintenance equipment for work on the trailheads. To help reduce possible disturbance, the work would be completed between July 16th and February 28th. No impacts to other survey and manage species are expected.

Plants: A botanical evaluation and several surveys have been completed for Table Rock

Wilderness. No species of concern were identified for any of the proposed projects. It is highly unlikely that any of the botanical Survey and Manage or Special Status species requiring surveys prior to habitat disturbing activities would be affected by these proposed projects. Should any of these species be present, the proposed actions would not have an have any bearing on their ability to persist at the site.

Water/Fish

The proposed projects does not take place within a riparian area and no sedimentation into streams or impacts to fish are expected. The proposed action would not prevent the attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives (See Appendix B). No cumulative impacts to water or fish resources are expected.

Soils

The proposed trail construction projects would not be incompatible with the soil types identified for the project areas. Slope on trails will be kept to less than 12 percent and switchbacks and waterbars will be used where necessary to reduce trail tread erosion. Graveling the trailhead parking areas will also help reduce surface soil erosion. No significant soil erosion or cumulative impacts to soil resources are expected.

Alternative B: No Action

Recreation/Wilderness/Visuals

If the proposed trail construction for the proposed Wapiti and Rooster Rock Trails does not occur, undesigned “impromptu” use trails may develop as a result of visitors seeking access to the wilderness without walking along existing roads. These undesigned trails would most likely not meet the design standards described in the design features of the proposed action. Those visitors that continue to hike along the roads to reach the old trailheads will not have as high quality of wilderness experience as would be provided by the proposed trails. If the trailheads are not improved, people will continue to park along existing road shoulders, some of which may be at unsafe locations.

Cultural Resources

No significant impacts to cultural resources are expected if the proposed action is not implemented. However, the enhancements to the visitors experience would not occur, although use of the historic motorcycle trail may continue without the proposed alignment and tread improvements. No cumulative impacts to cultural resources are expected.

Wildlife

If the proposed action is not implemented, undesigned trails may develop in locations where wildlife species have not been considered. This could increase the disturbance to wildlife to a greater extent with more people traveling cross country, than if the proposed trails were developed. No cumulative impacts to wildlife resources are expected.

Vegetation

If the proposed action is not implemented, undesigned trails may develop where plant species have not been considered. No cumulative impacts to plant resources are expected.

Sensitive, Threatened and Endangered Animal and Plant Species

If the proposed action is not implemented, undesigned trails may develop increasing the chances for disturbance to sensitive animal or plant species. No cumulative impacts to special status species are expected.

Water/Fish

If the proposed action is not implemented, undesigned trails may develop. Natural places of entry could include stream draws. This could lead to increased sedimentation into streams and the loss of riparian vegetation. No cumulative impacts to water or fish resources are expected.

Soils

If the proposed action is not implemented, undesigned trails may develop. Undesignated use established trails generally have higher grades and experience more problems with erosion. Not graveling the informal trailhead parking areas could also increase soil erosion as a result of use during wet periods. No cumulative impacts to soil resources are expected.

List of Preparers/Interdisciplinary Team Members

		Specialist Review	Date
Recreation, Wilderness, Visuals	Laura Graves, Outdoor Recreation Planner	<u>L.G.</u>	<u>7/16/01</u>
Wildlife:	Jim England, Wildlife Biologist	<u>J.E.</u>	<u>7/16/01</u>
Water Quality, Soils:	John Caruso, Natural Resource Specialist	<u>J.R.C.</u> CDS for	<u>7/16/01</u>
Fisheries:	Dave Roberts, Fish Biologist	<u>DR</u> <u>J.R.</u>	<u>7/16/01</u>
Botany, Vegetation:	Claire Hibler, Botanist	<u>CH</u>	<u>7/16/01</u>
Cultural, Historical:	Fran Philipek, Archeologist	<u>F.P.</u>	<u>7/16/01</u>
NEPA Review	Carolyn Sands, NEPA Coordinator	<u>C.S.</u>	<u>7/16/01</u>

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT	EFFECT		SECTION ADDRESSED IN TEXT
	YES	NO	
Air Quality		X	N/A, No Effect
Areas of Critical Env. Concern		X	N/A, No Effect
Cultural, Historic, Paleontological Resources	X		See Pages 11,13
Native American Religious Concerns	X		See Pages 11,13
Special Status/Threatened or Endangered Plant Species	X		See Pages 12,13
Special Status/Threatened or Endangered Animal Species	X		See Pages 12,13
Prime Farm Lands		X	N/A, No Effect
Flood Plains		X	N/A, No Effect
Hazardous/Solid Waste		X	N/A, No Effect
Drinking/Ground Water Quality		X	N/A, No Effect
Water/Fisheries Resources	X		See Pages 12,13, Appendix B
Riparian Habitat	X		See Appendix B
Wetlands	X		See Appendix B
Wild/Scenic Rivers		X	N/A, No Effect
Wilderness	X		See Pages 10,12
Adjacent Land Uses		X	N/A, No Effect
Mineral Resources		X	N/A, No Effect
Recreation/Visual Resources	X		See Pages 10,12
Soil Resources	X		See Pages 12,13
Vegetation Resources	X		See Pages 11,13
Wildlife Resources	X		See Pages 11,13
Fuels Management		X	N/A, No Effect

Appendix B: Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives

The Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP, Sept 1995), calls for the attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives. Each objective and the relationship to

the proposed action is discussed below.

Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives

This section will address the effects of implementing the proposed action, described in this document, in relation to each of the ACS objectives.

Forest Service and BLM-administered lands within the range of the spotted owl will be managed to:

Objective 1: Maintain and restore the distribution, diversity, and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features to ensure protection of the aquatic systems to which species, populations and communities are uniquely adapted.

Project Discussion: The proposed action would not occur within a riparian area or affect watershed or landscape-scale features. The proposed would not prevent the attainment of this objective.

Objective 2: Maintain and restore spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds. Lateral, longitudinal, and drainage network connections include floodplains, wetlands, upslope areas, headwater tributaries, and intact refugia. These network connections must provide chemically and physically unobstructed routes to areas critical for fulfilling life history requirements of aquatic and riparian-dependent species.

Project Discussion: The proposed action would not occur within a riparian area or affect the connectivity components described in Objective 2. The proposed action would not prevent the attainment of this objective.

Objective 3: Maintain and restore physical integrity of the aquatic system, including shorelines, banks, and bottom configurations.

Project Discussion: The proposed action would not occur within a riparian area or affect the physical integrity of aquatic systems. The proposed action would not prevent the attainment of this objective.

Objective 4: Maintain and restore water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic, and wetland ecosystems. Water quality must remain within the range that maintains the biological, physical, and chemical integrity of the system and benefits survival, growth, reproduction, and migration of individuals composing aquatic and riparian communities.

Project Discussion: The proposed action would not occur within a riparian area or affect water quality. The proposed action would not prevent the attainment of this objective.

Objective 5: Maintain and restore the sediment regime under which aquatic ecosystems evolved. Elements of the sediment regime include timing, volume, rate, and character of sediment input, storage and transport.

Project Discussion: The proposed action would not occur within a riparian area and should not affect the sediment regime of any aquatic ecosystems. The proposed action would not prevent the attainment of this objective.

Objective 6: Maintain and restore in-stream flows sufficient to create and sustain riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitats and to retain patterns of sediment, nutrient, and wood routing. The timing, magnitude, duration, and spatial distribution of peak, high, and low flows must be protected.

Project Discussion: The proposed action would not affect in-stream flows and would not prevent the attainment of this objective.

Objective 7: Maintain and restore the timing, variability, and duration of floodplain inundation and water table elevation in meadows and wetlands.

Project Discussion: The proposed action would not affect floodplains or prevent the attainment of this objective.

Objective 8: Maintain and restore the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas and wetlands to provide adequate summer and winter thermal regulation, nutrient filtering, appropriate rates of surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration and to supply amounts and distributions of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain physical complexity and stability.

Project Discussion: The proposed action would not occur within a riparian area and would not prevent the attainment of this objective.

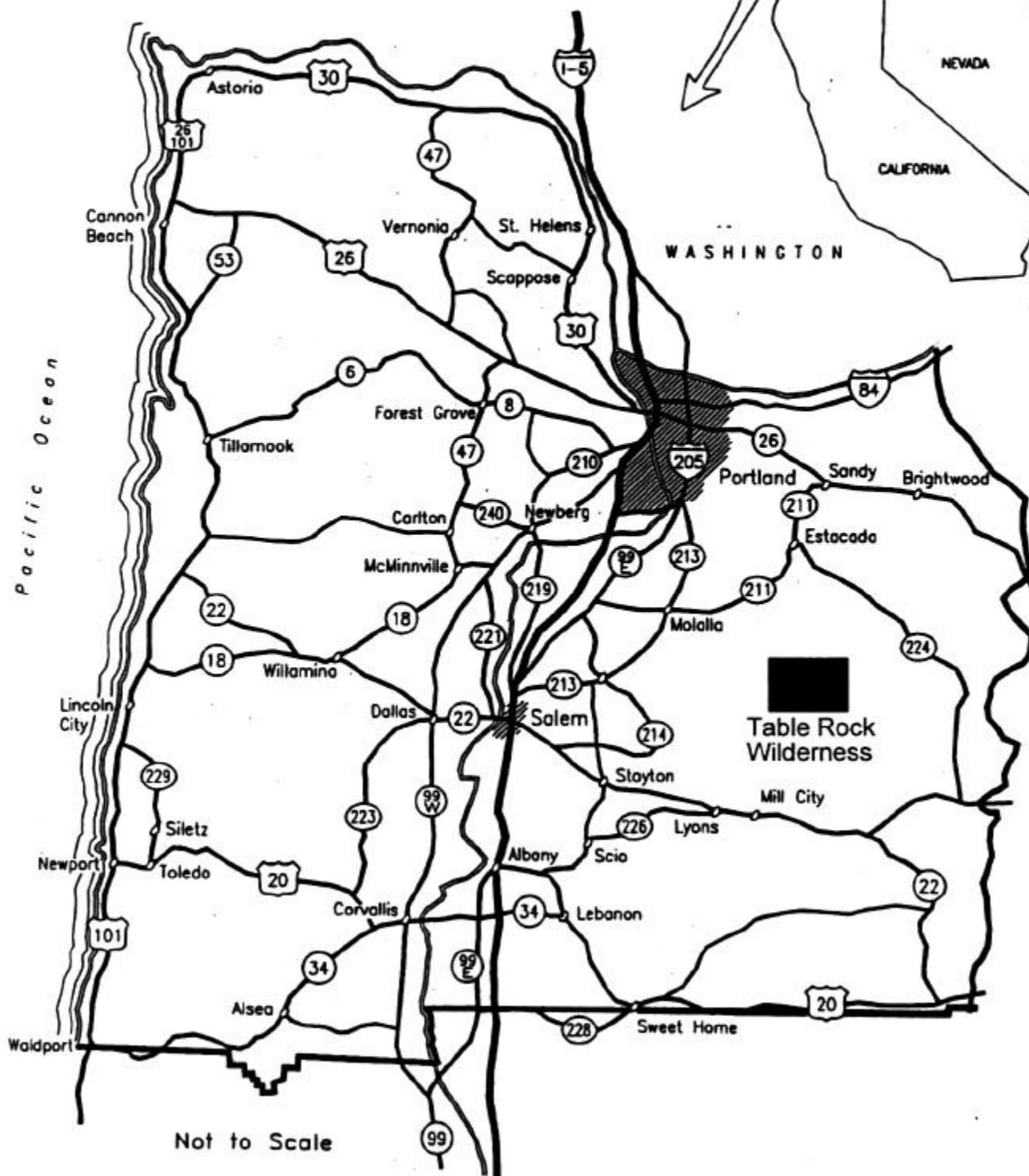
Objective 9: Maintain and restore habitat to support well-distributed populations of native plant, invertebrate, and vertebrate riparian-dependent species.

Project Discussion: The proposed action would not occur within a riparian area and would not prevent the attainment of this objective.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON

Vicinity Map



Project Map

